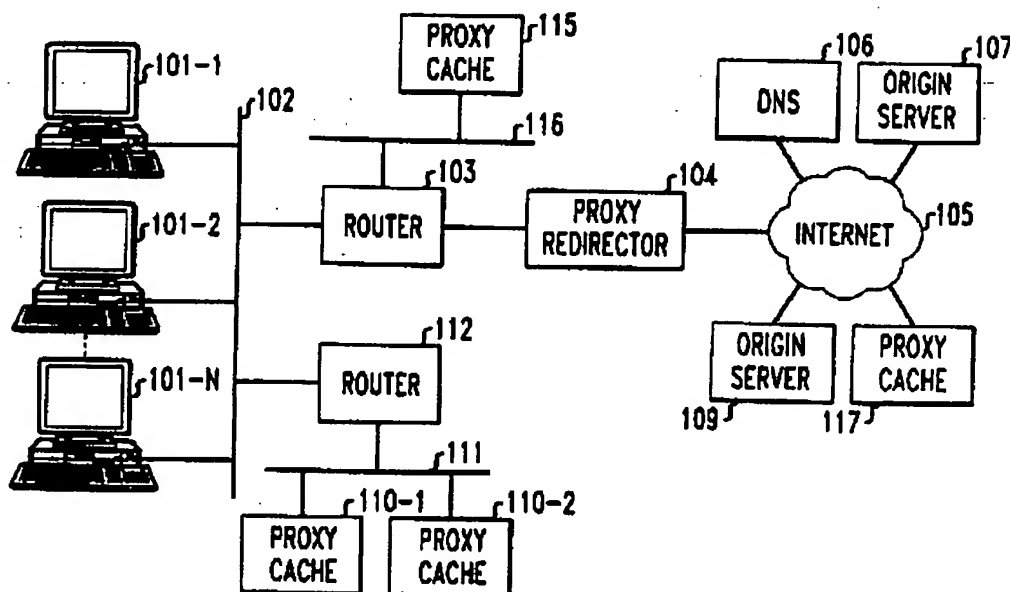


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(54) **METHODE ET DISPOSITIF D'ACHEMINEMENT
TRANSPARENT DES DEMANDES D'OBJETS WEB VERS UN
CACHE DE MANDATAIRE**
(54) **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR TRANSPARENTLY
DIRECTING REQUESTS FOR WEB OBJECTS TO PROXY
CACHES**



(57) In order to transparently redirect an HTTP connection request that is directed to an origin server (107) to a proxy cache (110-1), a proxy redirector (104) translates the destination address of packets directed to the origin server to the address of the proxy. During a handshaking procedure, a TCP connection is transparently established between the client (110-1) and the proxy cache. When the client transmits a GET request to what it thinks is the origin server, which request specifies the complete address of an object at that origin server that it wants a copy of, the proxy redirector modifies the complete address specified in that GET request before it is sent to the proxy cache. Specifically, the IP address of the origin server found in the destination field in the IP header of the one or more packets from the client containing the GET request is added by the proxy redirector as a prefix to the complete URL in the GET request to form an absolute URL. The proxy cache determines from that absolute URL whether it has the requested object stored in its cache. If it does, it sends the object back to the proxy redirector, which masquerades those packets as coming





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from the origin server by translating their destination address to the address of the client and their source address to that of the origin server. If the proxy does not have the requested object, a separate TCP connection is established between the proxy and the origin server from where the object is retrieved and then forwarded over the TCP connection between the client and the proxy. In order to account for the additional number of bytes in the GET request, an acknowledgement sequence number in packets returned 47 from the proxy that logically follow receipt of the GET request are decremented by that number by the proxy redirector before being forwarded to the client. Similarly, a sequence number in packets transmitted by the client subsequent to the GET request are incremented by that number before being forwarded by the proxy redirector to the proxy cache.



METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR TRANSPARENTLY DIRECTING REQUESTS FOR WEB OBJECTS TO PROXY CACHES

Abstract of the Disclosure

5 In order to transparently redirect an HTTP connection request that is directed to an origin server (107) to a proxy cache (110-1), a proxy redirector (104) translates the destination address of packets directed to the origin server to the address of the proxy. During a handshaking procedure, a TCP connection is transparently established between the client (110-1)
10 and the proxy cache. When the client transmits a GET request to what it thinks is the origin server, which request specifies the complete address of an object at that origin server that it wants a copy of, the proxy redirector modifies the complete address specified in that GET request before it is sent to the proxy cache. Specifically, the IP address of the origin server
15 found in the destination field in the IP header of the one or more packets from the client containing the GET request is added by the proxy redirector as a prefix to the complete URL in the GET request to form an absolute URL. The proxy cache determines from that absolute URL whether it has the requested object stored in its cache. If it does, it sends the object back
20 to the proxy redirector, which masquerades those packets as coming from the origin server by translating their destination address to the address of the client and their source address to that of the origin server. If the proxy does not have the requested object, a separate TCP connection is established between the proxy and the origin server from where the object
25 is retrieved and then forwarded over the TCP connection between the client and the proxy. In order to account for the additional number of bytes in the GET request, an acknowledgement sequence number in packets returned

from the proxy that logically follow receipt of the GET request are decremented by that number by the proxy redirector before being forwarded to the client. Similarly, a sequence number in packets transmitted by the client subsequent to the GET request are incremented by that number before being forwarded by the proxy redirector to the proxy cache.

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR TRANSPARENTLY DIRECTING REQUESTS FOR WEB OBJECTS TO PROXY CACHES

Field of the Invention

5 This invention relates to packet-switched computer networks, and more particularly, to a method and apparatus in such a network for transparently intercepting client web requests and redirecting them to proxy caches.

Background of the Invention

 Proxy caching is currently used to decrease both the latency of object retrieval and traffic on the Internet backbone. As is well known, if a proxy cache has stored a copy of an object from an origin server that has been requested by a client, the requested object is supplied to the client from the proxy cache rather than from the origin server. This, therefore, obviates the need to send the request over a wide area network, such as the Internet, to the origin server where the original object is stored and the responsive transmission of a copy of the requested object back over the network to the requesting client.

20 Direction of a request from a client to a proxy cache to determine whether a requested copy of an object is stored in the cache can be accomplished either transparently or non-transparently to the client. Non-transparent redirection is accomplished through the client's browser program which is configured to send all object requests to a designated proxy cache at a specified address. Generally, a browser can be configured to send all of its client requests to a designated proxy cache if the client is

connected on a Local Area Network (LAN), or on an Intranet behind a firewall, where a proxy cache associated with that LAN or Intranet is located. When clients are served by a large Internet Service Provider (ISP), however, it is not advantageous from the ISP's standpoint to allow its

5 subscribers to set their browsers to a specific proxy cache associated with the ISP. A large ISP likely will have many proxy caches in several locations and will thus want to maintain control over which of its several particular proxy caches a client request is directed. Further, if a proxy cache whose address is statically set in a client's browser becomes inoperative, all client

10 requests will fail.

It is therefore more desirable from an ISP's standpoint with respect to latency and minimizing traffic onto and off of the network to transparently intercept a client's web request and send it to one of its operative proxy caches to determine whether a copy of the requested object is stored there.

15 If a copy of the requested object is then found to be stored in that proxy cache, a copy of the object is sent to the client, which is unaware that it has been served an object from the proxy cache rather than from the origin server to which it made the request. If the proxy cache does not hold a copy of the requested object, then a separate connection is established

20 between the proxy cache and the origin server to obtain a copy of the object, which when returned to the proxy is sent to the client over the connection established between the client and the proxy.

When a client specifies a URL of the object it is requesting a copy of, a Domain Name Server (DNS) look-up is performed to determine from the

25 URL an IP address of an origin server which has that requested object. As a result of that look-up, an IP address is returned to the client of one of what may be several substantially equivalent servers that contain that object.